



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

Office with Primary Responsibility:	TSC	Effective Date: Prior Revision Date:	November 01, 2021 December 21, 2016
Office(s) with Secondary Responsibilities:	PSC, PNC, TSD, FCD, IDC, MFF	Number of Pages:	11
Forms Referenced in Procedure:	None	Related Procedures:	309, 802, 806

.01 INTRODUCTION

- A. This procedure is designed to provide direction in planning and implementing the appropriate police response to effectively manage and control crowds. Additionally, this procedure provides instruction for managing crowds during events which occur without sufficient notice to allow for comprehensive planning.
- B. The crowd monitoring management and control strategies employed in response to spontaneous events are similar to those used for planned ones, the only difference being the procedures are implemented quicker and in a different order.

.02 TERMINOLOGY *(For specific use within this procedure, see Glossary)*

Civil Demonstration
Spontaneous Events

Civil Disturbance
Unusual Occurrence

Civil Disorder

Planned Events

.03 POLICY

- A. The San Antonio Police Department provides the necessary direction, control, and security for persons assembled to take part in civic and community functions; provided, such direction, control, and security is in the best interest of the health, safety, and order of the City.
- B. The Department is committed to the protection of the constitutional rights of persons and groups to conduct peaceful and lawful demonstrations. However, in those situations which threaten the lives, property, rights, health, or safety of the citizens, or the general order of the City, the Department responds immediately to establish control and restore order.
- C. The sanctity of human life and individual liberties are immeasurable elements of modern society which vests Police Officers with the responsibility for the preservation and protection of its paramount values. In the pursuit of this responsibility, officers maintain the understanding that protection of property and apprehension of criminal offenders is subservient to the protection of life, including their own.

.04 GENERAL PROCEDURES

- A. The Deputy Chief assigned to the Tactical Support Division maintains the responsibility for identifying resource needs and planning the appropriate police response for scheduled events. This Deputy Chief is hereafter referred to as the Incident Commander for all planned events.
- B. The supervisory officer-in-charge of the appropriate Patrol Division service area is responsible for initiating the appropriate police action in response to spontaneous events. This supervisory officer, until relieved by a higher-ranking officer, is hereafter referred to as the Incident Commander.
- C. In response to planned or spontaneous events, the Incident Commander is responsible for:
 - 1. Meeting with the sponsors to discuss the required permits and applicable laws;



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

- a. In planned events, the sponsors or leaders are typically readily identifiable, allowing for scheduled informal meetings.
 - b. In spontaneous events, contact with the formal or informal leaders should be made if possible. When practical, this is a personal contact, otherwise the crowd may be addressed by use of a loudspeaker.
 - c. Efforts should be made to accommodate lawful requests by organizers who are involved in civil demonstrations to include marching and protesting. If it appears a civil disturbance, counter-protest, volatility or hostility may occur; clear guidelines to lawful and acceptable activities should be provided when possible.
2. Identifying and acquiring the needed staffing;
 - a. In planned events, the required staffing is obtained by the utilization of the on-duty members of the Traffic Section, Special Operations Section and Mobile Field Force with additional volunteers solicited when necessary. Sufficient staffing to provide for the relief of assigned personnel should be procured.
 - b. In spontaneous events, the available on-duty resources of all Patrol Division personnel is utilized (beginning with on-duty Mobile Field Force Officers), with additional staffing needs acquired through the implementation of a mobilization phase in accordance with GM Procedure 806, *Mobilization*.
 3. Identifying and procuring additional resource needs;
 - a. In both planned and spontaneous events this includes, but is not limited to, communication equipment, assignment of radio frequencies, vehicles, barricades, public address system, and equipment.
 - b. MFF equipment is stored at each Police Substation and is assigned to individual MFF Officers.
 - c. Additional riot control equipment is stored at the SAPD Police Headquarters MFF Ready Room located on the first floor. Any MFF Supervisor has access to this ready room.
 4. Establishing a field command post and staging area in accordance with GM Procedure 802, *Unusual Occurrences and Critical Incidents*;
 5. Conducting major operations relating to large scale civil demonstrations and disturbances in accordance with this procedure and GM Procedure 802;
 6. Defining and establishing the inner and outer perimeters;
 - a. Whether the event is planned or spontaneous, the inner and outer perimeters should be defined as soon as possible. Consideration is given to the size of the crowd, location of the event, and the potential for disorder in determining these perimeters. The utilization of barricades and deployment of personnel serve to identify these perimeters.
 - b. In events requiring large numbers of personnel or covering a large area, the area should be divided in the quadrants or sections with each quadrant or section under the direction of a supervisory or command level officer.
 7. Defining and controlling ingress and egress points;
 - a. The establishment and control of points of entry and exit for participants, spectators, and maintenance personnel should be identified in planned events. These points should be sufficient in number to provide for the orderly and effective entry of the anticipated number of persons.



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

- b. Emergency vehicle and emergency personnel entrances and exits should be defined. These points should be manned by officers to provide assistance in directing any required emergency vehicles or personnel. Establishment of these points must be a coordinated effort between all the emergency service agencies.
- 8. Considering possible scenarios and formulating contingency plans;
 - a. Emergency exits are established to provide for the expedient exit of persons in the event of a crisis.
 - b. Liaison with other emergency service agencies is maintained. Information relative to the size and circumstances of the event is provided.
 - c. A sufficient number of officers may be held in reserve or assigned to non-critical posts to provide immediate deployment or reassignment in the event of an emergency.

.05 CROWD MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

- A. Crowds can generally be categorized into three (3) types:
 - 1. Passive;
 - 2. Active; or
 - 3. Volatile.
- B. The first two (2) types of crowds, passive and active, require crowd monitoring and management techniques. The third type of crowd, volatile, requires crowd control strategies and/or dispersal tactics.
- C. Crowds can very rapidly turn from a self-controlled and passive to active or volatile. Officers should watch for signs that indicate a crowd is changing character.
- D. Each category of crowds can be divided, with each having a recommended action as follows:
 - 1. Passive:
 - a. Tranquil - The members of a tranquil crowd are lawfully pursuing their interest with the safety of others in mind. As such, they require no police control.
 - (1) Example: Mall shoppers
 - (2) Recommended Action: None
 - b. Apprehensive - A sudden or unanticipated development may cause members of a crowd to become apprehensive.
 - (1) Example: A bomb threat
 - (2) Recommended Action: Provide accurate information
 - c. Exuberant - An exuberant crowd gathers for an enjoyable event. This crowd responds to cheerleading, flag waving, and music. It is an enthusiastic crowd and follows cues.
 - (1) Example: Concerts and parades



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

(2) Recommended Action: Monitor

2. Active:

a. Confused - Members of a tranquil crowd who don't have sufficient information and the perplexing situation causes confusion and anxiety.

(1) Example: Stalled traffic

(2) Recommended Action: Provide accurate information

b. Annoyed - Members of passive crowds experiencing confusion and a feeling of being denied information relative to a current difficulty.

(1) Example: A scheduled event is delayed or postponed

(2) Recommended Action: Provide accurate information and monitor closely. Begin planning for management and control strategies.

c. Physically Active - Members of exuberant crowds who begin to throw objects for others to catch in the spirit of having fun.

(1) Example: Frisbee throwing in an arena/aerosol string dispensers.

(2) Recommended Action: Take immediate action to stop activity and prevent non-active participants from becoming annoyed.

d. Protesting - An antagonistic, often hostile, crowd seeking to bring about a change in a relationship or structure. If this crowd is frustrated in its immediate efforts to achieve change it may become volatile.

(1) Example: Labor dispute/civil protest

(2) Recommended Action: Contact leaders and establish firm rules for crowd's behavior. Begin planning for management and control strategies.

3. Volatile:

a. Panicked - Panic resulting from a need to get away from a situation or out of an area in preservation of life.

(1) Example: A fire in a crowded auditorium

(2) Recommended Action: Provide accurate information, use control measures and provide avenues of escape.

b. Malicious - This crowd, often a group of members within a crowd, possesses a self-centered intent. It pushes and shoves others without concern. Its behavior is without concern for the safety or well-being of others and breaks laws.

(1) Example: Throwing cans, bottles, and fireworks in an arena, gang members mixed in with a passive or active crowd.

(2) Recommended Action: Remove actors immediately or place under close surveillance.



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

- c. Unruly - This crowd, a mob, openly and defiantly breaks the law. It is angry and destructive. While a crowd of malicious individuals may be a small group within another crowd, this crowd is composed almost entirely of lawbreakers and rioters.

- (1) Example: A riot

- (2) Recommended Action: Full crowd control measures

.06 CROWD CONTROL STRATEGIES

- A. Crowd management techniques should be utilized first; however, in situations where there is an imminent threat to public safety, control strategies should be developed simultaneous to the implementation of management procedures.
- B. The governing factor in tactical operations is one of teamwork, each individual subordinating himself to the orders and direction of the team leader. The Incident Commander must evaluate his current resources and commit the available units to the portion of the disturbance which can be controlled. A force of insufficient strength, too hastily deployed, may only aggravate a situation. Individual officers, or small groups of officers, should not engage a malicious or unruly crowd on their own unless there are exigent circumstances which require immediate intervention. Leaders must ensure that the engaged police units grasp the initiative and assume and maintain the initial advantage in street situations.
- C. The strategies employed are determined by the Incident Commander and must be relevant to the situation. Situations and circumstances involved frequently change and the police must adjust to the given or perceived threat. Therefore, the following techniques do not establish a "set" plan of action but provide direction in formulating the methods to be utilized. The policy of the San Antonio Police Department is to utilize a progressive structured response. Each step in the progressive response is dictated by the crowds actions and reactions to officers presence. The progressive response is a guide for dealing with crowds that are hostile, have counter-protest groups present or grow in size demanding increased police response.
 - 1. Monitor:
 - a. Observe from an unobtrusive distance: crowds, demonstrations and disturbances to ensure the safe, free and legal expression of rights. Monitoring consists of assigning officers (uniformed and plain clothes when needed) to observe and assist.
 - 2. Overt Organized uniformed Presence:
 - a. The anxiety level of a crowd can occasionally be reduced by the knowledge of a substantial organized and uniformed police presence without the actual display of the force.
 - b. An overt organized uniformed presence, when used to disperse a crowd is most effective when the officers are assembled outside the view of the crowd and make a surprise formidable appearance. To be most effective the officers should march in formation into view, remain a reasonably safe distance from the crowd, halt, and remain in formation in view of the crowd. However, the Incident Commander must also recognize the presence of officers or tactical equipment and vehicles can also escalate tensions. The Incident Commander must consider the totality of the circumstances, confer with other commanders, and make decisions best suited for the event.
 - c. An Overt organized uniformed presence of force should not be utilized unless there is sufficient personnel and equipment to accomplish dispersal.



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

3. Selective arrests:

- a. In those situations where the overall crowd is generally peaceful and there are individuals within the crowd that hide behind the anonymity of the group to throw objects at the police or to incite or provoke the crowd, plainclothes officers, in teams, may be sent into the crowd to identify the person or persons.
 - (1) The plainclothes officers should not make the arrest(s), unless the person(s) leaves the crowd and the arrest(s) can be made without jeopardizing the identity of the officers.
 - (2) In a generally hostile crowd or when overt arrest(s) are necessary, a squad of uniformed officers should make the arrest(s).
- b. Prior to making selective arrests, a sufficient number of officers should be present to deal with the entire crowd, should it become necessary.

34. Dispersal orders:

- a. When crowd management and control measures fail or are insufficient a proclamation and dispersal order shall be given.
- b. The Incident Commander shall designate a command level officer to give the proclamation and order the crowd to disperse.
- c. The designated officer shall address the entire crowd with a public address system, stating the assembly is involved in an unlawful act and is in violation of a specific law (naming it). The assembly has been declared unlawful and ordered to disperse and provide a length of time for compliance. The order shall also include the direction and routes which should be used, and state that those individuals who fail to disperse will be arrested or subject to additional dispersal strategies and tactics.
- d. An avenue for the crowd to depart must be provided notice-of the dispersal order and the direction provided for departure of the crowd must be relayed to all operational units.
- e. Whenever possible, the order should be given in different directions and from different locations to ensure the dispersal order is heard by those in the crowd. Also, an audio/visual record of the dispersal order should be made.

.07 DISPERSAL TACTICS

- A. In the event a dispersal order has been given and the crowd fails to voluntarily disperse, the Incident Commander must employ tactics to disperse the crowd. Consideration of the existing circumstances must be given in determining the appropriate tactics utilized.
- B. The Incident Commander should determine the direction in which he intends to disperse the crowd. In determining the direction the crowd is to be directed, consideration should be given to dispersing the crowd away from business areas, where looting or arson may occur, and towards an area where the physical constraints tend to break the crowd into small groups, or into areas where minimal physical damage can occur.
- C. The following configurations and formations of staffing and their utilization for crowd control are limited to those areas where sufficient officers are available to direct and disband the crowd. Before employing crowd control formations, the area needs to be secure of sniper fire and minimal physical resistance anticipated. Officers are cautioned they should NOT attempt to manage, control or disperse a crowd alone or with an insufficient number of officer capable of accomplishing the task unless exigent circumstance requires immediate intervention (i.e. significant bodily injury or death).



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

1. Staffing configurations:
 - a. Squad - 1 Sergeant, 8-12 officers.
 - b. Platoon - 1 Lieutenant, 4 Squads.
 - c. Company - 1 Captain, 2+ Platoons.
 2. Tactical Formations:
 - a. A Line Formation is employed as either an offensive or defensive formation. Officers line up across a street or open area. It is continuous without spaces along the front. The flanks of the line must be anchored by obstacles such as buildings.
 - b. "Crossbow Line Formation" is employed in order to gain ground against protestors. A two-squad line formation holds current ground while a two squad column formation actively moves in the direction of a crowd gaining 10-15 yards and re-forming a line. The previous line formation forms a 2-column formation at the rear and repeats the process.
 - c. "Crossbow Arrest" is a selective arrest procedure using the 'crossbow line' formation to encircle predesignated individuals for arrest. The two line formation re-established past the encirclement to ensure officer safety during the arrest procedure.
 - d. "Separation formation" is used to separate two opposing groups of individuals. This can be accomplished with a minimum of 2 squads. Officers move in-between two opposing groups in a 2 column formation. Once in position they face outward and move the opposing groups apart.
 - e. A Wedge Formation" is an offensive formation used to divide a crowd into smaller segments.
- D. In the event the crowd is armed, or violent and property destruction has occurred or appears imminent, consideration should be given to the use of irritants and/or Less-Than-Lethal projectiles followed by a tactical sweep of the area. The use of these special intermediate force options is only authorized by order of the Chief of Police after conferring with the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander should consider several variables prior to making the recommendation or request to use these dispersal strategies. All of the following must be considered:
1. Determining if violence and/or property damage has occurred or is likely to occur.
 2. The potential for non-participants in the area to be adversely impacted.
 3. Whether officers in the area have the appropriate personal protective equipment so as not to hinder their ability to perform.
 4. Direction of the wind, the size of the crowd, and geographical conditions must be assessed.
 5. Irritants must be used in sufficient quantities to produce an immediate and decisive reaction.
 6. Notice to the officers involved and, if practical, to the crowd should be made prior to use of a irritants. Also, officers should be advised before less-than-lethal projectiles are deployed so they have situational awareness and are prepared to hear the sound of projectiles being discharged.
 7. If circumstances allow, smoke should be used first as the use of smoke helps determine the wind direction, areas of impact, and also has the potential to disperse the crowd without the use of irritants.



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

8. In some instances, such as anticipated violent resistance or large unruly crowds, it may be necessary for irritants to be covertly released to prevent aggressors from being able to prepare protective or counter measures to resist dispersal efforts.
 9. The use of less-than-lethal projectiles (baton rounds, bean bags, pepper balls, etc.) shall only be used against *specific* individuals who are actively involved in violence or physically resisting. For example, an individual who is throwing fireworks, hard/heavy objects, or using chemical agents against officers on scene.
 10. Irritants and less-than-lethal projectiles will be utilized according to the specific training guidelines for each and will only be deployed by officers certified to do so.
- E. After a successful dispersal effort, the crowd should be followed to prevent reformation.
1. Agitators should be arrested. If necessary, arrest groups should be assigned to the dispersal teams to maintain the integrity of the formations.
 2. Dispersal Teams should be assigned to sweep through affected areas. When the affected area is large, it should be divided into smaller sections with the necessary squads assigned to each section.
- F. Mobile saturation teams consisting of four (4) officers operating a single marked vehicle should be deployed in a sufficient number to allow the officers to:
1. Handle emergency calls within the outer perimeter;
 2. Act as a mobile reserve force to assist foot patrols;
 3. Act on its own initiative against small groups of rioters or looters;
 4. Patrol access routes; and
 5. Enforce a curfew.
- G. When sniper activity is reported or observed:
1. The area should be isolated;
 2. Officers should not return fire unless absolutely necessary; and
 3. The Incident Commander commences active shooter protocols or activates the Special Operations Unit.

.08 MULTIPLE ARREST PROCEDURES

- A. The concept of multiple arrest groups is to provide a specialized group of officers working together during large scale arrests at major events to deal with all aspects of the arrest process, from the initial arrest to the delivery of prisoners to the City of San Antonio Detention Center, permitting the primary line officers free to manage the event.
1. In most mass arrest situations, the Street Crime Unit or Mobile Field Force is utilized for making arrests. In the event this unit is not available, other personnel are utilized and organized according to groups prescribed in Subsection .08D.
 2. All members of arrest groups are in complete uniform unless otherwise directed by the Incident Commander.



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

- B. The Incident Commander, anticipating multiple arrest situations, will:
 - 1. Coordinates the implementation of these procedures with the commanding officer of the Special Operations Section. An estimate of the number of potential arrestees and whether they will be peaceful or violent is made to determine the number and size of arrest groups needed; and
 - 2. Notifies the City of San Antonio Detention Center and Juvenile Processing Office supervisors of the anticipated multiple arrests.
- C. The Commander of the Special Operations Section:
 - 1. Maintains the equipment and training status of arrest groups;
 - 2. Implements the multiple arrest procedures in their entirety when directed by the Incident Commander; and
 - 3. Designates a field detention area near the site to allow for the preparation of prisoners for booking.
- D. Arrest groups:
 - 1. Arrest groups consist of the following personnel:
 - a. Supervisory officer assigned as the group leader;
 - b. Two (2) or more officer arrest teams;
 - c. Two (2) or more officer support teams; and
 - d. One (1) or more officer transporting teams.
 - 2. Arrest groups maintain the following equipment:
 - a. Plastic Flexcuffs for handcuffs;
 - b. One or more prisoner transport wagons;
 - c. Booking slips; and
 - d. Cameras and related equipment.
 - 3. Arrest groups may expand in size or number according to the number of arrests anticipated or the amount of resistance contemplated. The determinant being the ability of the group to expedite the flow of arrestees.
- E. Arrest procedures:
 - 1. When practical an audio/visual record is made of all arrests.
 - 2. The supervisor assigned as the group leader designates arrest teams to begin arresting selected participants. A support team is assigned to the arrest team as back-up as needed.
 - 3. Persons who offer no resistance are walked to the field detention area. In the event a person offers passive resistance in refusing to accompany the officers, the person is lifted and walked or carried to the field detention area.



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

4. When groups of demonstrators to be arrested lock arms, the arrest team separates the demonstrators one at a time. A support team is assigned to serve as back-up for the arrest team as needed.
5. Each person arrested is handcuffed and searched. Flexcuffs are utilized to handcuff and identify persons arrested. In passive demonstrations, the Incident Commander may decide not to handcuff arrested persons in order to diminish the crowd's anxiety.
6. Persons arrested are taken to the field detention area by the arrest team. The assigned support team accompanies the arrest team to the field detention area, and then returns to the incident site for further assignment.
7. At the field detention area:
 - a. Arrestees, when necessary, are provided medical treatment, water, and access to bathroom facilities. Food is not provided to arrestees;
 - b. Video of the arrest team and the arrested person should be captured on digital media evidence;
 - c. One of the arrest team officers completes the offense report and booking slip.
 - d. The prisoner, prisoner's property, the booking slip, and offense report are delivered to the transporting officers; and
 - e. The arrest team returns to the incident site for further assignment.
8. At the direction of the arrest group supervisor, the transporting officers proceed to the Detention Center. Upon arrival the transporting officers:
 - a. Release the prisoners to the Detention Center personnel;
 - b. Make a copy of the offense report, and booking slip;
 - c. Present the booking slip to the Detention Center personnel;
 - d. Present the copy of the offense report to the magistrate's office and magistrates the prisoner;
 - e. Retain the-offense report, and the copy of the booking slip (stapled together); and
 - f. Return to the field detention area for further assignment.
9. Upon completion of the arrest process or upon relief, the transporting officers submit all offense reports, and booking slips to the supervisor of the arrest group.

.09 DE-MOBILIZATION PROCEDURE

- A. As the situation subsides and order is restored, the Incident Commander surveys the affected area and determines the need for police personnel and equipment at the scene. In the event the City of San Antonio Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated, the Incident Commander, in conjunction with the EOC Commander, decreases the number of personnel and equipment at the scene until only the personnel directly involved in the operation remain.
- B. In the event personnel were recalled through the implementation of a mobilization phase, relief of personnel is conducted as follows.



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 804 – Crowd Control and Events Management

1. Phase 1 – The relief of personnel begins with personnel assigned under the last mobilization phase implemented and continues until only Traffic Section personnel are assigned.
2. Phase 2 – Eight (8) hour shifts utilizing Traffic Section personnel are implemented.
3. Phase 3 – Normal operations are restored.

.10 CONCLUSION ACTIVITIES

- A. Upon the deactivation of subordinate units, commanders ensure each supervisor submits a written report to:
 1. Account for all equipment issued to personnel under their supervision; and
 2. Record the name, badge number, dates, times, and assignments for each member under their supervision.
- B. Upon conclusion of all activities related to a spontaneous event:
 1. All commanders prepare an after-action report which is submitted to the Incident Commander within ten (10) days. The after-action report contains a complete and detailed account of the operation of subordinate units under their command during the event.
 2. The Incident Commander prepares a final report detailing the Department response to the event. This report is submitted, along with a copy of the Command Post Journal, to the Chief of Police within thirty (30) days.
 3. The Fiscal Planning Manager prepares an operational cost report which is submitted to the Office of the Chief.
- C. After-action critiques are conducted at the direction of the Chief of Police or the Incident Commander.